

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 MCT-01 AID-05 /076 W
-----029880 291136Z /10/43

R 281448Z DEC 77
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9936
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, IS, JO, EG, XF
SUBJECT: RETURN OF WEST BANK VISITORS FROM EGYPT

1. SHAABAN YOUSEF ALI, MUKHTAR OF THE BETHLEHEM DHEISHA
REFUGEE CAMP, DISCUSSED WITH A CONGEN EMPLOYEE THE IMPRES-
SIONS HE HAD DRAWN AS ONE OF THE 170 WEST BANK RESIDENTS
WHO RECENTLY VISITED EGYPT IN SUPPORT OF SADAT'S PEACE
INITIATIVE.

2. IN GLOWING TERMS, ALI PRAISED THE GENEROSITY WITH
WHICH THE CAIRO GOVERNMENT RECEIVED THE CHRISTMAS EVE
PILGRIMAGE. EXCEPT FOR 340 ISRAELI LIRE (APPROX. \$23)
FOR THE FARE FROM BETHLEHEM TO EL ARISH, ALI HAD NOT
INCURRED A SINGLE EXPENSE ON HIS TRIP. HOTEL ROOMS, THREE
MEALS A DAY, TRANSPORTATION IN EGYPT, AND VARIOUS OTHER
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AMENITIES WERE PROVIDED--APPARENTLY BY THE EGYPTIAN
GOVERNMENT--"GRATIS."

3. ENTERING EGYPT ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, THE GROUP
RETURNED LATE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24. DURING THEIR STAY,
THEY WERE TREATED TO SEVERAL TOURS OF THE AREA, INTRODUCED
TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL--ALI DID NOT

REMEMBER THE NAMES--AND FINALLY TAKEN ON DECEMBER 24 TO ISMAILYIA TO MEET SADAT.

4. IN AN ADDRESS TO THE GROUP THAT WAS LATER BROADCAST BY THE ISRAELI AND JORDANIAN NEWS SERVICES, SADAT ASSURED THE GROUP THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD PROTECT THEM AND THAT THE TIME WOULD COME WHEN THEY SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

5. THE GROUP CAME FROM THE SOUTHERN CITIES OF HEBRON, BETHLEHEM, JERICHO AND RAMALLAH, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF HUSEIN SHIYOUKHI, A RAMALLAH LAWYER, AND HAJ BURHAN EL JAABRI OF HEBRON. OTHER NOTABLE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION WERE MOHAMAD DOUDIN, DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE IN HEBRON; MOUSA QASSEM, DIRECTOR OF LAND REGISTRATION FOR THE WEST BANK; AND AN UNNAMED YOUNG LAWYER FROM EAST JERUSALEM.

6. THE NABLUS DELEGATION, ORGANIZED BY ABDULRA 'OUF AL FARIS, DID NOT MAKE THE TRIP. ACCORDING TO OTHER SOURCES, AL FARIS HAS BEEN ILL AND CONFINED TO HIS BED UNTIL RECENTLY. IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THE GROUP FROM NABLUS HAS NOW ANY FIRM PLANS TO VISIT CAIRO.

7. COMMENT: THE VISIT WAS PLANNED AS A DEMONSTRATION OF WEST BANK SUPPORT FOR THE SADAT INITIATIVE. SADAT RECEIVED THE DELEGATES GRACEFULLY BUT DID NOT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MENTION THEM IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE HE GAVE THE NEXT DAY; NOR DOES THE EGYPTIAN PRESS APPEAR TO HAVE ACCORDED MUCH ATTENTION TO THE VISIT. ARABIC LANGUAGE PRESS ON THE WEST BANK WAS EQUALLY RETICENT--NO COMMENT ON THE VISIT APPEARED SINCE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23. ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND THAT SHIYOUKHI HAS INTIMATED TO A JOURNALIST THAT HE MAY TRY TO ORGANIZE AN INDEPENDENT WEST BANK POLITICAL FORCE, WE SEE NO EVIDENCE THAT HIS POST-CAIRO EFFORTS WILL BE ANY MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN HIS EFFORTS WERE SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. IN BRIEF, THIS TRIP TO CAIRO WILL PROBABLY GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS A VERY SMALL FOOTNOTE. NEWLIN

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Sent Date: 28-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
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